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OBSERVATIONS

On a New

Plan of the Education

OF A

Young PRINCE,

By the CHEVALIER RAMSEY.

In a Letter to the AUTHOR.

Timeo Danaos & dona ferentes.

Virg. *Æneid.* Lib. II.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN SHUCKBURGH, at the
Sun, next the *Inner-Temple-Gate, Fleet-*
street. M.DCC.xxxii.

(Price Six-Pence.)

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By the Gentleman, RAMESSEY.

In a Letter to the Author.

Printed by W. Baskett, in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

LONDON:
Printed for John Sturges, at the
Sign of the Green Dragon, in
St. Paul's Church-Yard.
(1734)

OBSERVATIONS

On a New

Plan of the Education,

OF A

Young PRINCE.

SIR,

I SHALL forbear making any Apology for the Freedom I have here taken, of calling in question the Opinions advanced in a late *Plan of Education* published under your Name: For if they are built upon a firm and solid Basis, they may well bid Defiance to all the vain and weak At-

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tempts

tempts that can be made against them : But if, on the contrary, they shall be found to have a false and deceitful Foundation, then will you have Reason to rejoice at the being delivered from their Delusion. In either Case, you cannot possibly receive any real Injury or Loss, since it becomes a Philosopher to prefer Truth before all Things, by which he is sure no Man was ever hurt; and as sure, that he is hurt who continues in any Error or Ignorance whatsoever.

BUT, to speak sincerely, it must be confessed, that I had little Regard to your self in this Matter. Nor could I conceive the least Hopes, that even Truth itself (if I should be so happy at any Time as to hit upon it) could have much Weight with one who seemed already to have drank so deep of Error and Imposture. Yet, since you have attempted to spread the Contagion around, under the fair Disguise of a zealous Affec-
tion

tion and Love for Mankind, (prophaning the higheſt Character,) have endeavoured to corrupt and mislead weak Minds, in a Point of the utmoſt Concern and Importance; It is the Duty of every Man, at leaſt as a Member of Civil Society, to caution the Un- wary from truſting to ſo falſe and treacherous a Guide. Nor will this Appellation, I per- ſuade myſelf, appear at all too harſh, to any one who ſhall candidly weigh the following Objections.

FIRST then, it appears to me altogether unaccountable, why in ſo elaborate and fi- niſhed a Performance, which ſeems intended to comprehend all that you imagined in any Degree neceſſary or conducive to the future Welfare of your Royal Pupil, the Body ſhould not have been thought worthy of ſome Care, as well as the Mind? For al- though the Culture of the Mind muſt ever be allowed to be the principal Aim and End

of a right Education; yet, as the Body is the Medium by which we are united to this World, so it should seem that this too, however mean an Opinion you may entertain of it, ought not totally to be neglected; for without the Body we are not able to do any Thing; and how useful, or rather necessary a good Constitution is found in every Office and Function of Life, is well known and experienced by all Men. Nor, indeed, is Life itself of any Worth without it; for Health gives the Relish to every Enjoyment, and is like fair Weather to the Soul. It was for these Reasons that a sound Body is continually joined with a sound Mind, in the Description of human Felicity. And if we look back into the History of former Ages, we shall find it to have been the constant Custom of the wisest and best regulated Governments, to begin their Education with the Culture of the Body, that it might afterwards be able to execute the Dictates of the Understanding

Understanding. This was the Institution made use of, not only at *Athens*, but amongst the rest of the *Grecian* States; and was so antient and universal a Custom in all those Parts, that no Man knew who was the Author of it; but was supposed to to have been received from the *Egyptians*.

IN the Second Place, the Division of your *Plan* into three principal Heads, the *Understanding*, the *Imagination*, and the *Heart*; (by the last of which I presume you mean the Will or Appetite,) seems both unnatural and unnecessary: Nor is any such Partition to be found amongst the most approved Writers in any Sect, either of the *Grecian* or or *Roman* Philosophers. For it is well known that the *Stoicks*, as well as the Followers of *Socrates* and *Plato*, speak of but two general Powers or Faculties of the Soul. And thus they usually reckon up three Parts of the human System, * the Body, the Ap-
petite,

* Σῶμα ψύχη νῆς or τὸ ἡγμεδύκον. Antoninus. Σῶμα ὁρᾶς νῆς. Aristot. and to the same Effect are *Plato* and *Xenophon*.

petite, and the Mind or Understanding. The two former of these, being destitute of Reason, they held to have been appointed by Nature to obey ; but that the last, by the special Favour of the Gods, was bestowed on Man as a Guide and Conductress in Life. So that the true Discipline in their Account seems to have been, to restore the natural Harmony of these three Parts of Man, and to render the Body obedient to the Appetite, and the Appetite to the Understanding. And, indeed, the introducing a third general Faculty of the Soul, *viz.* the Imagination or Fancy, has apparently confounded and perplexed your whole Scheme ; for by a Parity of Reason, every particular Power of the Mind, as the Judgment, Memory, Invention, and the like, might have been made a distinct Part of Education, and each of them the Subject of a separate Treatise. Nor will it be thought strange, that the Wisdom of Antiquity should not have been over solicitous

licitous to give Rules for the improving, or (winging) the Imagination, which you make an essential Article of your Plan, at a Period of Life, when this Faculty is usually found of itself too headstrong and violent.

IT was these Reflections, Sir, amongst many others, that induced me to suspect your Scheme, or Platform, to be both imperfect and ill-grounded; nor by any Means reconcileable either to Reason, or to the Philosophy of the Antients, of whom you seem to profess your self an Admirer. I shall proceed to consider the Superstructure, which I doubt can hardly be supported on so weak and irregular a Basis.

AND here it may be best, perhaps, to follow you in your own Method, and to begin, as you have done, with the Improvement of the Understanding. And in the first Place, I shall pass over what you say about learning

learning the Languages, (because Custom obliged you to give into the Method of the Schools;) so that this is not to be accounted any Opinion of your own. But as to the beginning the Culture of the Soul with Mathematicks and natural Philosophy; because, you say, youthful Minds are capable very early of Reason; I am sorry to find this Opinion, unless it had better Arguments to support it, so repugnant to what the Antients have delivered down to us of these Matters; (I mention their Authority more particularly, because you seem to pique your self upon having a more than ordinary Acquaintance with their Writings; and would pass upon the World as a Reviver and Restorer of true Philosophy;) for it was a known and settled Rule amongst them, that after the Care of the Body, the next, in the Order of Nature, was the Culture of the * Morals or Appetite; because it is evident

* Vide Aristot. Poet. libro ultimo, & Plato in Republica & Legibus.

dent that the Passions discover themselves in Children long before Reason, and the Understanding is observed to be latest of all in its Growth, rarely arriving at any Height, till that * Age which you have fixed for their having done with set Studies.

NOR does there seem to be less Error in the Proportion of this Sort of Knowledge, which you would have taught the Pupil; (the five first Books of *Euclid*, a Taste of *Algebra*, Fluxions, and the Doctrine of the Curves; and then he is to be instructed in the Application of all these to the Knowledge of Nature, and its Operations;) I shall beg Leave, in Opposition to this, to remind you of what *Xenophon* reports to have been the Opinion of *Socrates* as to these Things; since it seems well worthy of that Character which he received from the Oracle at *Delphos*.

C

For

* Viz. Fifteen.

For * he assures us, " That *Socrates* never
 " disputed, as the Sophists used to do, con-
 " cerning the Nature of all Things, or en-
 " quired into the Manner of the Creation
 " and Frame of the World ; and from what
 " necessary Causes each of the heavenly
 " Bodies proceeded. On the contrary, he
 " exposed the Folly of those who are sol-
 " licitous about these Matters. And first
 " asked, If it was after having acquired a
 " perfect Knowledge of human Things,
 " that they applied themselves to search
 " after the Divine ? Or, if they thought
 " they had acted prudently in neglecting the
 " the Affairs below, which concerned them,
 " to busy themselves about Things above ?"
 He said, besides, " That he should be glad
 " to know of such Persons, if they were in
 " Hopes one Day or other to put in Prac-
 " tice what they had learned, as those pro-
 " mise themselves, who learn human Arts,
 " and

* Xen. de factis & dictis Socratis lib. 1. fol. 413. Edit. per
 Henricum Stephanum Anno 1561.

[II]

“ and so be able to make Winds, and Rains,
 “ and Seasons, when they wanted them. As
 “ for his own Part, he reasoned continually
 “ of such Subjects as were of Use to Man-
 “ kind, searching diligently into the Nature
 “ of Piety and Impiety, of Honesty and
 “ Dishonesty, of Justice and Injustice, of
 “ Courage and Cowardice, of Sobriety and
 “ Madness, of a State and a Statesman, of
 “ a Kingdom, and of one who is fit to go-
 “ vern; and in like Manner, of whatever
 “ else he thought would tend to make
 “ those who knew them good and virtuous;
 “ and all who were ignorant of them, to
 “ deserve the Appellation of Slaves.” And
 in * another Place, he tells us the Advice
 that *Socrates* gave his Friends about the
 Conduct of their Studies “ He taught al-
 “ so how far one who was rightly educated
 “ ought to be Master of every Thing.

C 3

“ That

* Vide Xen. de factis & dictis Socratis lib. 4. fol. 474. Edit.
 per Henricum Stephanum Anno. 1561.

“ Thus for Geometry, he said, a Man should
 “ learn so much of it, as would enable him,
 “ if there were Occasion, to measure the
 “ Land rightly that he received or parted
 “ with, or to apportion it out, or to make
 “ a Plan of a Piece of Work ; and that this
 “ was so easy to be attained, that one, who
 “ applied his Mind to Mensuration, might
 “ likewise know the Dimensions of the
 “ whole Earth, and how to measure it.
 “ But he disapproved of meddling with such
 “ Problems in Geometry as are difficult to
 “ be understood. For, he said, he could
 “ not see of what Use they were, (although
 “ he himself was no Stranger to them ;)
 “ but he said they were enough to take up
 “ a Man’s whole Life, and to hinder his
 “ learning many other Things that are use-
 “ ful. He further advised them to know
 “ something of Astrology, so far as to be
 “ able to find out the Time of the Night,
 “ and what Month or Year it is ; for travel-
 “ ling

“ ling by Land or Sea, or keeping Watch,
 “ and such other Things as require the being
 “ acquainted with these Matters, that they
 “ might distinguish with Certainty the several
 “ Seasons and Times: And all this, he
 “ he said, might with Ease be learn’d of
 “ of those who hunt by Night, and of
 “ Pilots, and many others, whose Business
 “ it is to know them. But he vehemently
 “ discouraged the learning so much of Astro-
 “ nomy, as to know those Things which
 “ are not in the same Circle, and the Pla-
 “ nets, and unfixed Stars, their Distances
 “ from the Earth, and Courses, and to
 “ wear themselves out in the Search after the
 “ Causes of them; for neither did he see
 “ any Use in these Things, (yet he himself
 “ was well versed in them,) but he said that
 “ they too were sufficient to employ a
 “ Man’s Life-time, and to prevent his
 “ learning many useful Things.—He ad-
 “ vised also the learning Arithmetick; and
 “ in

“ in this, likewise, as well as the rest, to
 “ guard against a vain and useless Curiosity :
 “ But so far as they conduced to any good
 “ End in Life, he himself enquired dili-
 “ gently into all Things, and discoursed
 “ daily of them with his Friends.”

HERE you find this truly Divine Philo-
 sopher was not at all apprehensive that Man-
 kind would want Proofs of a Deity, not-
 withstanding that they were ignorant of these
 sublimer Sciences, of Geometry, Astrono-
 my, and natural Philosophy. Nor does he
 give the least Hint that they would be of
 any Service in this Respect ; and yet this is
 the only Use you seem to apply them to ;
 for he well knew, that there was no Occa-
 sion to climb up into the Heavens for Argu-
 ments to prove the Existence of a Sovereign
 Mind, since God has written himself, in the
 plainest and most legible Characters, in Ob-
 jects nearer home, even in our very selves.

So

So that the Cause of Atheism and Irreligion, must ever be attributed rather to bad Morals, than to any Ignorance of the abstruser Sciences; and we may venture to lay it down as an undoubted Truth, that the Reasons for a virtuous Life will never be wanting, to him that has the Habit of Virtue.

BUT you seem to be aware, that the Mind would be in danger of being carried away by these Speculations; and therefore, in the next Paragrah, we find three Rules, (to prevent its being absorpt in them, and to detach it from an over-weening Opinion of its own Abilities. 1. That the Creation is a Picture of the Infinity and Immensity of the Deity. 2. That in the Point we inhabit, we only know some superficial Qualities and Properties of Nature, in so far as is necessary to our present State, Conduct, and Uses) These are Truths, Sir, I shall not dispute with you. But the natural Conclusion from them

them seems to be, that we ought not to make such Things any Part of our serious employ, any farther than they conduced to these Ends, and were practicable and necessary in in those Circumstances of Life we are engaged in : But how you will reconcile this with the Learning of Fluxions, and the Doctrine of Curves, added to a tolerable Share of Sir *Isaac Newton's* Philosophy, I profess, I cannot conceive. But what is still more wonderful, is the Third Rule you have prescribed, *viz.* (That the Cause of Attraction, and all the Appearances of Nature, are to be attributed to an Ætherial Fluid which pervades all Things, and is as the *Sensorium* of the Deity ;) for this seems not only ill suited, to answer the End you had proposed, (*viz.* the preventing the Mind's being absorpt by over-curious Speculations ;) but extremely contradictory to, and inconsistent with what you had said just before ; for after having informed us that God had almost

most totally concealed the Knowledge of natural Things from Man, you go on to tell the World that you had made a Discovery of the grand Secret and Cause of all the Mysteries of Nature, (*viz.* the ætherial Fluid, &c.) And this you would have taught the Pupil, (to prevent his Mind being absorpt, &c.) I shall forbear making any ill-natured Reflections here, however justly you may have exposed yourself to them; since my Design is not Ridicule, but soberly to weigh the the Doctrines you have sent abroad. I shall therefore pass over to the Conclusion of your first Piece, which you draw up as a Corollary from all that had preceded, (*viz.* that the Pupil will by these great Ideas enlarge his Mind, and be taught to aspire to Immortality.) But the Question still will be, Whether there is any Occasion to go through all this Apparatus, to wean him from the World, and to furnish him with great and noble Sentiments of the Deity? Whether a

bare Narration of the Discoveries in Natural
 Philosophy, will not be sufficient, without
 a Course of Mathematical Demonstrations?
 (Not to mention how far from Infallability
 our best Discoveries are still esteemed by
 some of the wisest and ablest Men in these
 Sciences.) May he not be shewn the mutual
 Dependence and Union of all Things, the
 Relation of the Vegetable System to the
 Animal, and of both to Man? Again, of
 Man himself to Society; and all these com-
 bined together in one Globe of Earth? Fur-
 ther, of this Earth to the Solar System; and
 of this System, by infinite Gradations, to
 the Universe in general? And will he then
 want a noble and elevated Idea of that
 Spirit which made, animates, and governs
 this good and beautiful Frame of all Things?
 Or is such a one likely [to be puffed up with
 that little Vanity which is used to fill vulgar
 Souls?] Nor is it the [Immensity and Infi-
 nity] so much as the Goodness of the Deity,
 that

that the Mind of the Pupil ought to be inspired with: Since the one will only teach him to fear; but the other to reverence, and be enamoured of the Sovereign Genius.

THESE, Sir, are the Objections that occurred to me, on the Reading your first Head of the Understanding. The next, in order, is that of the Imagination or Fancy: But this I shall take no Notice of; because I have before made a general Objection to it, as a superfluous and unnecessary Part of your Plan. Nor shall I now go about to examine the Account you have given of the Mythology of the Antients; since it seems to be altogether foreign to the main Design; although, perhaps, were there Occasion, it might not be very difficult to shew, that you are not less fallible even in these favourite Studies.

I SHALL proceed therefore to your last Division, *viz.* the Heart. [While the Understanding and Imagination are thus strengthened and polish'd, the Morals (you say) are to be perfected; and such Sciences taught, as give us a true Knowledge of God, of ourselves, and of our fellow Creatures; and that this is the Use that is to be made of Mathematicks and Natural Philosophy.] Is it possible, Sir, that you could [think and feel] before you wrote this? Or is Virtue and Morality of so small an Account with you, that you should either not esteem it worth your while to give any Rules about it, or which is next to none, should send us to Mathematicks and Natural Philosophy for the Acquisition of it? Believe me, if you could once persuade the World that Virtue were the Fruits of these Sciences, we should then all join with you, both in the Study of them through our whole Lives, and the

Recom-

Recommendation of the same to others. For what is there of the good Things of this World, to stand in Composition with Virtue? Is there any Action, either publick or private, in which Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude, are not found necessary? Or what Society or Family can subsist without Justice? Come on then, let us fairly examine the Matter: Is it always true, that those are most ready in the Practice of these Virtues, who are best skilled in the speculative Sciences? Or on the contrary, do not the Lives of such Philosophers too often convince us, that it is not Speculation, but Use and Exercise, on which they depend. May not the same be said of all the other Arts, Musick, Sculpture, Painting, and the like, That no one can excel in any of them, who is a Stranger to the Practice, however conversant he may be in the Theory? If this is the Case, perhaps We shall better employ our Time in the subduing

subduing our Passions, and acquiring good Habits; and more especially since we are assured by one, * who was well acquainted with these Matters, that this is the Beginning, Middle, and End of a wise and useful Education.

BUT Morality is a Subject which seems not to suit your Taste; or how else came it about that you should break off in so abrupt a Manner, [to the three Arts of Imitation, Dancing, Painting, and Musick, which you would have joined to the Study of Poetry.] And yet even here you seem either not to have known, or invidiously to have concealed from us the noble Use Antiquity made of these Arts, by your calling them [mere Amusements, and Intervals of Business;] for the Use they employ'd them in, was to fill the Souls of the
Youth

* *Plutarch* in his Treatise of Education.

Youth with virtuous Images, that they might be charmed and enamoured with the Love of this highest Beauty. And for this Purpose they had Musick more especially in the greatest Esteem, and made it an essential Part of Education; because they found that Sounds had a more that ordinary Effect upon the Mind. Nay, they went so far as to regulate these Things by * Laws, least there should be any Innovation in a Matter which they found had such an Influence on the Manners of the People.

BUT not to insist upon these [accessary Accomplishments, as you call them,] I shall proceed to your Master-Science, [*μεγιστον μαθημα*,] the Idea of Infinity, from whence you derive all those notable Discoveries.

1. The Proof a Deity *a priori*, and of his Power, Wisdom and Goodness.
2. From the

* These were by way of Eminence called *Nomoi*. *V. Platon. de Leg. Lib. II. fol. 522. Edit. Basil. Anno 1534. Aristidis Quintiliani Lib. II. fol. 67. Edit. per Meibomium Anno 1652.*

the Knowledge of a Deity, and of our own Nature, that we are fallen and degenerated from our original Purity ; and that the only Way of being restored, is, to lay open our superior Faculties to his pure and intellectual Influences. 3. That from the same Principles proceed all the moral and social Duties, from a Desire of imitating the divine Perfections. 4. That from the same Source flow all the great Maxims of Politicks and Government, by considering God as the common Father and Prince of Mankind. And that hence arises the Law of Nature, antecedent to all fictitious Contracts between King and People. 5. That it follows from the same Principles, that the Love of Order is compatible with the Love of Liberty ; and though it were true, that all Power resided originally in the People, yet it don't thence follow, that they have a Right to retake it when they think themselves injured by the Legislature. Such

Maxims

Maxims can proceed only from a perfect Ignorance of human Nature, and of the Corruption of our Species, of which the most Part can only be governed by Obedience and Fear, and not by Reason or Persuasion, &c. These are the famous Precepts you would have instilled into your young Prince, [that he might be kept free from all Sects and Parties and as well from Irreligion on the one hand, as Superstition on the other,] I shall therefore consider them in order. And, First, as to your Idea of Infinity, which you say is [congenial to our spiritual Natures,] and which you have laid down as the Basis of all your Discoveries; it might have been a real Discovery, if you had let us know, what Idea you have of it? The late Mr. *Lock* * has endeavoured to prove (and 'till his Reasons are confuted, we must incline to the Belief

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of

* See His Chapter of Infinity in, &c. in *Book I.*

of it,) that we can have no positive Idea of Infinity; and that even our negative Idea of it is so obscure, that we are always confounded in our Disputes about it. And can it then be believed, that this is congenial to our Nature? Or what Conclusions can we hope to draw from an Idea, which shall be clearer than the Idea itself? Not to mention the Absurdity of proving the Wisdom and Goodness of the Deity from Infinity, which are Ideas altogether separate, and distinct, and not in the least dependant upon, or related to each other. But Secondly, You say that from the Knowledge of a Deity, and of our own Nature, is discoverable physical Evil and the Fall of Man. As for the Fall of Man, I profess I owe all my Knowledge of it to divine Revelation, than which I desire no better Proof. Nor can I conceive of what Use it can be to Religion and Virtue, to prove the Existence of Evil in the World: Since this has
ever

ever been the Cause of Triumph to impious Men and Unbeleivers. But as to the Method you have prescribed for the Restoration of Man, (by the vital and central Conversion of the Soul to its first Principle) it would have been much more intelligible to me, if you had taught them to purify the Soul by the Practice of the moral Virtues, that it might be a Temple fit for the Reception of the divine Influx. Nor is there any Thing, as I can conceive, likely to restore us to the Favour of God, but the real and unfeigned Practice of Justice, Temperance, and Holiness. Thirdly, Your deriving all the moral and social Duties from a Desire of imitating the divine Perfections, however just a Principle it may be, is, perhaps, too remote from common Understanding; and Men must first be taught that Virtue is their Interest, before so abstract a Consideration can have any Influence over their Lives. Fourthly, Your Proof of the Law of Na-

ture, [from considering God as the common Father or Governor of Mankind, antecedent to any fictitious Contracts between King and People,] is, I presume, an Oversight in the very stating the Question ; because no one was ever so absurd as to maintain that the Law of Nature was founded on Compact, but the civil or municipal Laws of particular Countries, have been, and still are maintained to owe their Original to this alone. But the most extraordinary of Doctrine, is what you have advanced in the fifth Deduction, which (however artfully you may have glossed them over, and mingled the Truth with Falshood, to make it the more palitable,) plainly contains in it the most tyrannical Principles of passive Obedience and Non-Resistance. It will be needless to refute these Opinion, which have long ago been exploded in this Kingdom: And, indeed, to dwell particularly on every Article, would swell this Epistle

to

to too great a Length: I shall therefore hasten to the Conclusion.

AND now, Sir, I have gone through the Examination, both of your Plan in general, and of the several Parts of it. And upon the Whole, should rather be induced to think it calculated for the training up some enthusiastick Priest or Jesuit, who might hereafter fill the Minds of the People with strange Mysteries and Miracles, than of a noble and generous Youth, who was one Day to rule a great and free People; and should be no less able to protect and defend them, by his Courage and Skill in the Art of War, than by his Prudence and Justice to make them happy in Time of Peace.

I am, SIR,

Your very humble Servant,

A. B.